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Education

It is the peculiarity and honour of the Christian Religion that it disclaims all affinity to ignorance, that it received none of its principles and owes none of its progress to darkened or perverted intellect. The name of its Author is "the Light of the world," the name of his followers "Children of the Light". ~~While~~ All the various systems of human origin which were the early contemporaries of Christianity, ~~while they~~ were considered by the people as equally true, they were regarded by the philosophers as equally false. But the Christian system as a full combination of the noblest principles of philosophy, was fitted to put to the test ~~to the test~~ this wisdom of the wise, to give a new direction to the energies of the sage, and ~~all~~ the aspirations of genius. The trial of Eighteen Centuries produces ample proof that it is fully adequate to the accomplishment of its bold design. That degradation mental and moral, the most stubborn bigotry and the most refined sophistry are unable to withstand its all transforming influence. Yet it should not be forgotten that it is a part of God's plan of Evangelizing the world that these instruments in the mighty work are to be prepared of intellectual as well as moral strength of Education and varied knowledge as well as spiritual gifts. It is our first duty to make a report of what the Church has done particularly within the last year in the way of imparting such qualifications to its future messengers & teachers & the condition of the institutions established for this purpose.

The benevolent associations of our own country for sustaining young men in their preparation for the ministry are still in successful operation. The American Ed So Society has been labouring for some months

past under serious embarrassment. The decrease in its funds
doubtless the principal cause of its number of beneficiaries
less than it was but ages ago. It has now 63 & under its care in 89 diff institutions and A Spirit
rule for the liberality of those who originated & this establishment that in the
face of all the dark signs which threaten its prosperity they should resolute in-
crease the amount of the annual appropriations to its beneficiaries. Connected
with the various branches of this Society there are probably about 450 beneficiaries. It seems
to be in part through want of vigour in some of these auxilliaries that the parent
institution is so hard put with difficulties. The education Society, under
the patronage of the Synod of Michigan & people a wish to become a branch
of the A.E. Society. The Board readily complies with this request.
The operations of this Society extend out of N. England into the
Middle, western & Southern States. Under judicious management
& the vigorous support of its friends, this Society will doubtless
continue as a most national Engine to work with efficiency
& success in the noble enterprise of furnishing Labourers for
the vineyard of the Lord. It has already taken under its
patronage more than 4000 young men
The hist. of the Gen'l Assembly's Board of Education for the Presb. Church for the past
year indicates no embarrassment though the amount
of its receipts shows that it has not entirely escaped the
pecuniary troubles of the day. Yet as to as to 60 of its beneficiaries
have for different reasons ceased to be connected with the Society,
the ordinary proportion between the funds & the number under
its care remain undisturbed. The whole number connected with
the Board according to the last report is 562. The ample
resources of the Pres. Church & the Society's liberal principle
of the Patronage cannot but seem for it wide influence &
permanent success.

The Committee notice with pleasure the gradual acknowledgment
of all the principal Denominations of christians in our
Land, in the work of preparing for the church an Educated

Ministry

Young as our system of Seminaries is in point of age, we may claim the honor of first establishing Institutions exclusively for Theological Education. There are now 35 Seminaries of this class in our Country, of which the one at Andover is the oldest & ran over a few years later. The whole number of Students in them all is nearly one thousand, giving an average of about 28 members to each Seminary. Judging from the last Catalogues of some of the most flourishing of these Institutions, we should judge that the whole body of Theol. Students has been not a little diminished of late. This, also, will doubtless prove a cause in the general pecuniary derangement & will thus be but of temporary detriment to the Church. A new Theological Institution has been established in the City of N. York & commenced its operations under very favorable auspices.

Next to those of our own Country, the Theol. Seminaries of Germany deserve our attention. For information on this point, we resort to the excellent report of Prof. Stowe. The German Institutions are their origin, patronage & regulations to the magnanimous King of Prussia, who prizing the merit of a pure Evangelical Ministry in the Ref. Church, founded several Theol. Schools & placed at their head, some of the most pious & learned Divines of the States of Germany. The number of Students in each is so comparatively small, that all may have the advantages of free intercourse with their Professors. & the length of their course of study is two or three years exclusive of that which they previously complete in the Universities. The great object of instruction is to train the Students for pastoral labor, by moulding them to a practical form the various subjects connected with Theological Literature.

Their plan of Lectures is very comprehensive giving more variety & unity to the subjects than belong generally to the courses in our Seminaries. For instance there is one course of Lectures on the History of the religious spirit & the religious life in the christian Church. Another on the History of catechising & the religious instruction. Another on the Science of Education, the principles of school-keeping. The others do not differ so much from the plan adopted in our own Institutions. As to their other exercises they have besides those in the interpretation of the Bible weekly discussions in Latin on Theological subjects Also practice exercises in preaching, which are subjected to a severe regimen of Logic & Criticism. We are not prepared to say that with regard to this point, they are too exact for the popular taste of Germany; but do very much question the fitness of such productions to suit the American pulpit or the American heart. (In full & common it is necessary — write out the sermon) In fact the universal practice in it is to "the sermon" }
Their devotional exercises also are more systematized than in our Seminaries. Their conferences are of two kinds; one consisting of small divisions for the purpose of "more familiar & confidential intercourse" the other consisting of all the members for the discussion of practical subjects of a more general character. They have frequent meetings during the week more strictly devotional

Theological Education in England as connected with the Exclusive systems of the Universities is by no means adequate to the professional duties & responsibilities of the Clergy. Among the Dissenters however, Candidates for the ministry are more thoroughly & systematically educated. They have quite a number of flourishing Seminaries

The limits assigned to the Committee include all matters of prominent interest connected with the general subject of Education

But it is unnecessary to say that the limits assigned to our report are by no means commensurate with this Title & can therefore comprise but a very small part of it.
We would first notice with great pleasure the enlightened action of different Legislatures in our Country. Many is contemplating the experiment of so elevating the standard of Common School Education as to render Academies unnecessary as distinct Institutions on the ground that wherever the latter are located Common schools are uniformly found to languish. The Pennsylvania Legislature, especially, has set a noble example of Paternal regard for popular & liberal Education In adding to the number of her Colleges & bestowing upon them such pecuniary facilities as will place them upon a permanent basis A system of Common Schools also has been established in that State under Legislative control & patronage Two new Colleges have recently commenced operation in Pennsylvania. There are now 20 Colleges in our Country containing about 1,200 Students But notwithstanding this favorable testimony to the state of Education in our Land there are still many portions of it which do not furnish such facilities for the acquisition of knowledge as will render men competent to discharge the high duties of free & independent citizens. New England & the State of New York alone will bear a comparison with Prussia or Scotland in the general diffusion of the elementary principles Science through all classes of the Community.
The Com would gladly urge the Ocean in order to prevent many interesting facts ~~relating~~ relating to the state of Education in the British Empire & on the Continent of Europe But your patience is already exhausted & our time already expired. Lewis